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CANADA AND CHRISTENDOM

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EDITORIAL

Canada and Christendom has entered upon another stage in its history and development. Members of the Editorial Board have either become so involved in primary responsibilities, or else have become so separated geographically, that close group unity has broken down. This loss of rapport has resulted in pronounced difficulties of literary production and publication. Many changes in the personnel of the Editorial Board have come with the publication of this issue.

The spirit of Canada and Christendom, however, has not changed. It is our concern not to have a rigid pattern of thought, but to accommodate all areas of knowledge and experience which appear to contribute to the strengthening of parish life, and the revitalizing of the whole Church.

This process is aided, we believe, through the publishing of material arising out of fresh thought and action. It is placed before you as worthwhile experience on which to draw for more creative work. It is published, not to meet a deadline, but to fill the need for new experience. This can best be met through a giving and receiving on the part of both the Editorial Board and reading public. Your contributions are sought; your co-operation is needed.

E. D. B.

The Catholic tradition is a broad one, and it is adapted to appeal to man's whole being. Body and soul alike are involved in our salvation, and the many aspects of the Catholic tradition meet the manifold constitution of human nature. By directing our attention tonight to man's mental capacities -- to his need for correct and inspiring teaching, I do not mean to undervalue the other aspects of his nature. Moreover, by emphasizing the place of the Word as instruction I do not intend to say this exhausts the meaning of the Word, or that the sacramental life of the Church is of less, even of equal importance. But it is because I feel we have been less successful in teaching our people than in providing them with the values of other ministrations, that I have chosen this topic tonight.

The Word is central to Christianity; and among other things it entails instruction. The contact of the original faith with Greek culture enriched the Hebrew understanding of the message with many fertile ideas. Logos and paideia in their Christian forms gave a significant place to the rational understanding of the faith, and the informed Christian became the ideal in early Greek Christianity. The bishop among his other duties was teacher. His cathedra was his teaching chair (as we say nowadays a professor has a "chair" in a certain subject) -- it being customary in the ancient world for the teacher to sit when he instructed his pupils. In the same way Matthew begins the Sermon on the Mount with the statement that when Jesus had sat down, he opened his mouth and taught them saying .... From cathedra, or teaching chair, comes cathedral; and it is well to remind ourselves that the original purpose of a cathedral was nothing less than to be teaching center of the diocese. There the bishop, like a professor, had his "chair". The Word was something to be taught as well as proclaimed. Men must understand before they can most fruitfully believe; though it is equally true they must first believe before they can most fruitfully understand. With the problems, however, of the relation of faith to understanding and the

ways in which the one or the other is prior, I am nor here concerned. I may perhaps be permitted in passing to note that the ancient controversy on this score suffers from overemphasis on both sides. I think it is as wrong to say that faith is prior to understanding as to say that understanding is prior to faith.

Tonight, however, I do not wish to penetrate such mysteries. Rather is my aim more directly practical. I want to speak of the function of the priest as teacher, it being recognised that teaching is an essential element in the life of the Christian.

Before I proceed it will be necessary to speak of two dangers which beset any emphasis upon this teaching function of the clergy. "Be not many teachers" is sound advice from that epistle of straw, as Luther dubbed it, the letter of James. When one recalls, however, that the ancient Israelites bitterly complained of having to make bricks without straw, we may perhaps be more thankful than was Luther that there is some straw in the New Testament from which to create Christian bricks, -- for edification, we might say, in the original meaning of that term as "building up".

James, of course, was referring to the danger that any Christian who had a smattering of knowledge was likely to set up a sect of his own. That is, indeed, how heretical notions spread so rapidly in the primitive church. The wandering philosophic teacher such as Valentinus or Marcion, was a constant challenge to the bishop's cathedra. But it is to another aspect of James' warning that I would draw your attention. The real danger in overemphasizing teaching is that we should fall into the error which beset the ancient Greeks -- the idea that knowledge itself is salvation. For Socrates, to know the truth was the same thing as to do the truth. The presupposition was that the enlightened man was at the same time the good man. If one knew the truth, he could and would automatically do it. On this too optimistic view of human nature a great deal of our modern education operates. The assumption is that if our textbooks are made a little better and if we all

take courses in good citizenship and good housekeeping, the wrongs of this sorry world will soon be righted. This, of course, is not the Christian view. The problem is not that we don't know enough (we often, indeed, know too much for our own good), but that we are incapable of putting what we do know rightly into practice. It is not man's mind which needs information, so much as man's will which needs converting. Hence understanding is never sufficient. It is a change of will which is more essential than a change of mind. What, then, we say tonight must not be construed in the sense that informative teaching by itself is the means of salvation.

There is yet a second danger to which emphasis on teaching is open; and it is the danger into which the Protestant Churches of the Reformation fell. It is to elevate teaching above the Liturgy. One can understand how this came about. The decadence of the late middle ages was responsible for no small degree of ignorance and superstition, and this situation had surely to be corrected. The Reformers conceived of their position largely as teachers, instructing the people in simple Gospel truths all too long neglected. As children of the Renaissance they inherited a passion for education, and the catechetical instruction of the Reformation was one Christian form the New Learning took. But it went to undue extremes. Not for nothing did the minister now wear a black academic gown at the liturgy, and symbolize the idea that the celebrant stood in relation to the congregation as a professor to his students. Not for nothing did Melanchthon refer to the Church as coetus shcolasticus -- a Sunday school. Indeed, worship itself became a sort of Sunday school. The central place was given to the sermon, as the word of instruction, and various parts of the liturgy were revised to this end. Luther's idea of Preface was that of a sermonette regarding the Lord's Supper; while the typical Calvinist Exhortations grew out of the Orate fratres of the old Mass. The Sacrament was neglected to stress the place of the Word; and those deeper reaches of the religious life, which the Sacrament touches, were sacrificed to man's intellectual needs. There was often a tendency to address prayers more to the congregation than to God; and so the homiletical prayer, sometimes indis-

tinguishable from a sermon, was born. Worship was for edification, instead of edification being an element in worship. The intimate connection between Word and sacrament was broken. The congregation became the listening audience, while the body of the church even today is referred to by some Protestants as the "auditorium".

Our emphasis on the need for positive religious instruction must certainly avoid this danger. The teaching of the Church must not usurp the place of Liturgy.

If, however, we avoid these two pitfalls, there can be nothing more salutary for us than a revival of true religious instruction. It is surely desperately needed. Anglican preaching is not in too healthy a state. Often it is downright dull because it is deficient in content. Of this I shall have more to say later. But let me add a few other reasons for our need to emphasize teaching. Religious ignorance among our laity is often abysmal. Secular education is rapidly rising. More people go to High School and College than ever before. Yet religious education is on the decline. Not only is it separated from general education, but we are not making the best use of the opportunities we do have to give instruction. An enterprising rector of one of our churches in the States recently sent out a questionnaire to his congregation -- a sort of simple test on religious knowledge. The results were horrifying. Members of his congregation, who Sunday after Sunday had attended church, were ignorant of the simplest Biblical stories which we used to take for granted among Christian children; while they showed an equal illiteracy and unconcern about fundamental doctrines such as the Trinity, and about the distinctive elements of the Anglican tradition.

The tragedy of this situation arises from the fact that in Anglicanism freedom is a most prized possession. If I were to say what is the most important contribution we as a Church have made to the Christian venture, I should say it lay in developing a form of Catholicism based on freedom. We are not authoritarian in the Roman manner of Catholicism: nor do we stand

for that type of individual freedom which is germane to the Protestant tradition. Rather have we tried to emphasize freedom within the Catholic structure, to allow latitude, while by our dogma and liturgy remaining true to the basically Catholic faith. That is why to outsiders we give such a strange impression. Every extreme is represented within our walls. Yet we worship by the same liturgy and are bound by the same fundamental dogma. In Anglicanism, I think, a Catholic can breathe, while in Romanism there is a danger of stifling.

Now the tragedy of religious ignorance among our laity is very great when we put so large a price on freedom. For freedom means responsibility; and an educated laity is essential if true freedom is to be enjoyed. Our laity play an increasingly large role in the councils of our Church. We do not think of them merely as the guardians of our temporal assets. But they cannot play this wider role effectively unless they know what they are doing and what the Church really stands for. It is sufficient in Romanism for the clergy to know the answers and for the laity to obey. With us it is different. The English spirit of democracy and independence is as much a part of our tradition as any other. Nor is it a narrowly national characteristic. It is something we would like to share. But it only has meaning to the extent that our laity are informed Christians, able to make religious judgments themselves and able to give a reason for the faith that is in them. They must, of course, look to the clergy for instruction. But it is not the kind of instruction adapted to keep them always in the state of children. Rather it is the kind whose purpose is to make them mature; so that they may accept the responsibilities of a Catholicism whose structure is that of Christian freedom.

Then again, we live in a world of propaganda. Everywhere we are beset by voices proclaiming, loudly and long, false standards by which to run our lives. Advertisements appeal to anything but honor or self-sacrifice. The comfort of the body, the security of riches, the terror of unpopularity, the delights of eating and drinking, even the financial advantages of education -- all these are daily drummed into our ears. We have

learned from Hitler and Stalin that if you say something often enough and noisily enough, people will eventually believe it. How, then, in this din of voices, is it likely that truth will triumph, unless it, too, makes a noise and is unwearying in proclaiming itself? We often suffer from the delusion that the virtues of truth are such that when it is once spoken it will easily counteract an error told a hundred times. But the world is not like that. Truth is always at the disadvantage, for the world does not want to hear the truth, and least of all to do it. For that reason we must be untiring in proclaiming it.

If, then, we recognize this need to be more proficient teachers, let us consider for a moment some principles which may guide us.

The first is this: simplicity with insight. The aim of the teacher is not to show his learning; rather it is to help someone else to learn something. That is an obvious dictum; but it is one which every teacher is in danger of forgetting. There is a subtle, unconscious fallacy in most of us, that the more learnedly we present a truth, the more commendable we make it. I do not mean that we do this merely for selfish reasons, to show how wise we are ourselves. Rather do we seem to imagine that truth is given an extra attractiveness by being put in a sort of academic cellophane. But exactly the opposite is the case. The teacher must clarify and illuminate; and he can only do this by being direct and simple. It is a good rule that until you can put something into monosyllables you do not really understand it yourself. The clouded mind always begins with long words and ends up with parenthesis. In what marked contrast stands the teaching of Jesus -- direct, homely, monosyllabic!

But simplicity requires insight -- otherwise the monosyllable is that of the simpleton. Insight does not come from books, but from life; and only to the extent that we know what is in men's hearts (and especially what is in our own), will we have insight. Let me give a single illustration. How can we teach people about the Christian attitude to sickness? Not, surely, by being merely simple, and telling them to endure it

with fortitude or that it is the punishment of their sins. No, but by being simple with insight -- by bringing them to the point where they can ask themselves the new and creative question which changes all tragedy into adventure, and finally turns it into joy. Where they started by saying with resentment, "Why did this happen to me?", they must finally be led to ask, "What am I called to do with this?" It is a long path that most sick people have to travel before they reach that question; but the whole path is one of monosyllables, and neither life nor language becomes more difficult if we tread this path to its final goal.

A second principle of our teaching should be this: to grasp the significance of symbols. It is not only because Jesus was an Easterner that he taught in parables; it was because parables are a more effective way of teaching. We have grown too abstract in our instruction and need to recover the parable and the symbol. This is something far deeper than merely accumulating better sermon illustrations. It means we must be at home in the realm of the symbolic, and overcome that literal, matter-of-fact attitude born of an age over-zealous for scientific achievement. In modern psychology we are, of course, doing exactly that, and discovering over again the way our deeper selves register truth in terms of myth and symbol. Indeed, until we do grasp the primacy of this mode of becoming aware, we shall miss much of the significance of the New Testament. The modern controversy about the history and myth of the Gospel will only be resolved when we are able to penetrate each of these two areas of discourse and appreciate how they are interwoven in the pages of Scripture. Let a man understand something of his own fantasies and dreams, let him develop his imagination, and he will discover realms of truth long closed to him.

We often forget that so much of primitive Christianity moved in this twilight realm between history and myth. I may mention by way of illustration how some learned scholars, even now, remain puzzled about one of the most frequent pictures in the catacombs. It is

that of Peter striking a rock and water flowing from it. Scholars are disturbed as to why this should be Peter and not Moses, and they sometimes write a learned footnote to the intent that the incident probably comes from some lost apocryphal gospel. Yet how utterly obvious such a picture is! It needs not a lost apocryphal gospel, but a lost imagination, to reveal its meaning. For Roman Christianity Peter is, of course, the new Moses - the new lawgiver. Of course he strikes the rock of the Church (which he is), and of course there flows from it the waters of baptism. That is exactly how the primitive Church thought and taught -- in terms of symbols, deep and refreshing in their content. It is often amazing with what uncanny accuracy the symbols were chosen, just as the subconscious chooses the most revealing and imaginative symbols in a dream.

It is in such symbols that we should do more teaching. In psychoanalysis symbols play a predominant role, and people are not so estranged from them as we sometimes imagine. Mostly they are shy about them and tend to repress them. We should give them the chance to bring them forth; and by teaching through symbols we will acquaint them better with their own reality as well as with the reality of the Gospel.

The third principle of teaching, to which I would draw your attention, is that of love. You cannot teach unless you love. For teaching is a dialogue between souls, and the soul receptive to hear the truth, is the soul prepared by love. We think of the apostle John as the apostle of love. And so he is. But he is also the apostle of truth, and the one hardest upon heresy in the New Testament. And there is a basic reason for that. Truth and love belong together. You cannot grasp the truth unless you love and are loved; nor can you teach it without love. Truth endangers us; truth causes anxiety and we would flee from it. Hence it can only be taught, in the deepest sense, where there is security. And the only ground of security in life, that is enduring, is love. Every teacher must surely have noticed that just to the extent he tries to show off, or is on the defensive, he fails to impart anything more than bare information. But for teaching to affect life, something

deeper must happen. And it can only happen where there is love, for no one will face the dangers of truth unless he knows he can find support for his conflict.

Then again, we often fail to realize how even quite factual information has deep symbolic meaning for people. Hence in our teaching we must be ever on the alert and sensitive to these underlying meanings. This is especially true when one is dealing with knowledge of ultimate things, which involve our salvation -- our actual choice of life or death. We must love in order that our people may understand.

Dr. Cyril C. Richardson.

CHRISTIANITY IN AN INDUSTRIALISED SOCIETY (1)

"OUT OF TOUCH"

When the thought was expressed what I was doing in my rather peculiar job would be of interest to you, I began to wonder just how to begin. One point was obvious - there was far too much for two articles! It must be taken for granted that you, the reader, will know something of the background to the situation facing Christianity in the U.K. today. Thus I have sought to set down in this first article the "why" and the "how" of my appointment. Then in the second to pin-point more specifically the actual work being done in centres like Sheffield, Southwark, Coventry, Leicester, Croydon, Birmingham, and Bristol. If I underline Bristol a little too much, it will be because my Assistant and I face the problem created by the fact that Christianity is "Out of touch" here in Bristol.

This is a fact: institutionalised Christianity, which we speak of as "The Church" has lost contact with the great mass of people - men, women and children. Christ just does not make sense! This situation exists in spite of our heritage, our Christian heritage.

The heritage of the Prayer Book, centuries of worship, prayer, example, tradition, history, architecture, position, and so on. There is at the moment an enquiry after Christ - largely to be found in the Universities: though even here it is limited. We are, therefore, faced with a gap between what the Church thinks, says, and does, and what man in an industrialised society is thinking, saying, and doing. To appreciate this fully one should take a survey of the political, economic, and social history of Britain over the last 150 years. In the space available this is impossible: But I can refer you to G.M. Trevelyan's books "English Social History" (Longmans) as one of the very useful books covering this particular subject - though in fact it goes back to the grass-roots.

At the same time there is no harm in recommending a renewal of acquaintance with Charles Dickens. He was not a weaver of fairy tales! He comments with accuracy upon the 19th Century scene. That Century of the very rich and the very poor. That Century of great industrial, economic, and political development. That Century of Britain's dominance in world affairs. That Century of growing Church wealth and of great Missionary expansion. That Century of the birth of the Trade Union Movement and the Labour Party. That Century of over emphasising one's love towards God, to the weakening of one's love towards one's neighbour.

In these years the black octupus of Industry stretched ever further into "England's green and pleasant land". Men and women were leaving the green fields in search of employment in the towns. They became the cheap labour, that dealt with the cheap raw materials, that created Britain's power. Hand operated machines gave way to steam, to electricity, to the eve of atomic energy as the power of operation. This is the age of achievement, yet it remains the era of child labour, women being used as pit-ponies, slave labour in factories. The era of poverty, squalor, malnutrition, runted bodies, stunted intellects, slums.

Who moved in the face of this? Man himself, of course. Man associated himself with man to protect

his rights as a human being, to be strong, to work for security for himself, and his family. Thus came the Trade Unions, which also gave rise to the political philosophy that expresses the mind of this movement, the Labour Party.

What of the Church? Emulating a certain Priest and Levite - passing by on the other side! Or in the words of a thoughtful Trade Union leader - "The Church sold herself for thirty pieces of silver!" Yet not every Christian man, for the names of Lord Shaftesbury, Robert Owen, F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, remind us that some Christian men and women did try to draw others to recognise the obvious, that Christ might be shown to care. Coming nearer to our own time, the names of men like "Dick" Sheppard, Hugh Lister, and William Temple, indicate that some consciences are still alive. But the Church as a whole - the organised institutional body - remained and remains, for the greater part, unmoved.

It is quite true that here and there in times of adversity "soup kitchens" have been organised, that a Union had its roots in a Church meeting, that Union leadership in the initial stages came from lay preachers, that certain employers did try to exercise a Christian relationship with their employees. Yet, if Maurice had kept his eyes towards heaven and his mouth shut, he would never have been forced from his Chair of Theology at King's College, London, by the opinions of "good" Churchpeople. Had these same people heard him, followed him, what would be the weight and power of Christ in the affairs of men in this our day and generation? Instead of which, we have a "gap".

It was, then, for the exploration of this gap, that William Temple initiated certain steps some twelve years ago. As a result of these steps a great deal of back-stage work was done, which ultimately saw experimental work begun in Sheffield (8 years ago), Southwark (7 years ago), Leicester (5 years ago), Bristol (five years ago), Coventry (5 years ago), Croydon (4 years ago), and Birmingham (twelve months ago). Not in one of these centres will you be given the

complete "know-how", and this for the simple reason that each is in the process of exploring, what is to the Church, unknown territory. Each contributes to the other out of experience gained, but not one is the "blue-print" of any of the others.

So much then for the "why" - and looking back on these preceding paragraphs I become accutely conscious of the very slender skeleton on which I want to build some flesh! As to "how" this appointment came to be made? It is quite a simple answer: the interest, the concern, and the anxiety of the Bishop of Bristol. The Church in claiming to speak to the "total life" of man was making some pretty hideous mistakes due to her complete lack of knowledge and understanding. The Bishop decided that the situation was ripe in Bristol for a man to be let loose - to be an "odd bod" who would make contact with men of all kinds and conditions, and would begin to sort out the causes for our present-day separation, and then to make experimental efforts to bridge this separation. This is naturally the second part of the story and as in all good serials will be dealt with in the next issue.

Meanwhile, to act as the stepping-stone into the next article, it might be as well to set down some of the important points with which one is concerned. It is quite apparent from discussions with clergy and ministers that until they come face to face with the environment of industry and commerce, they hold the idea that all they have to do is to round-up a group of people and preach to them for the whole problem to resolve itself. What they do not understand is this, that most of the world beyond the Church walls is not at all convinced that he, or the Church, has anything to say that is relevant! It is right then to expect clergy and Christian laymen to ask themselves this question: Am I sure of relevance of my faith to the affairs of daily life?

Don't be satisfied with the obvious answer. Sort it out in relation to the belligerent anti-Christian man or woman. Sort it out in relation to one's understanding of Christian activity in community life. To defend one's faith under informed attack tests one's

own knowledge and understanding. To get to a Christian point of view and a Christian action in relation to drainage, water supply, housing, race relations, is to put Christ into the midst of men's lives. These are not preaching points, they are living points vital to the world of industrialised society for they concern human relationships. Consequently the concern of my job is identical with that of my Lord and Master - a concern for people where they are.

JOHN R. G. RAGG, M.A., Social and
Industrial Adviser to the Bishop of Bristol.

EDITORS' NOTES

We are very grateful to Dr. Cyril C. Richardson of Union Theological Seminary, who has kindly allowed his article "The Priest as Teacher" to be published at this time. This article was originally delivered at the Trinity College Convocation on April 28th, 1952. Part two of this article will be published in the next issue of "Canada and Christendom".

We also appreciate the efforts made by The Rev. John R. G. Ragg to produce for our readers some creative thought regarding the task of the Church in an industrialised society. We are happy to be able to print the first in a series of two articles on this vital subject.